

LD 1961  
.G541  
P6  
1837  
Copy 1

# ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE PHILODEMIC SOCIETY

OF

GEORGETOWN COLLEGE,

JULY 25, 1837,

BY CHARLES CONSTANTINE FISE, D. D.

---

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY JACOB GIBSON, JR.

1837.

REVISED

1871

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

1871

ASTOR LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

1871

ASTOR LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

ASTOR LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

ASTOR LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

1871

ASTOR LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

# ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE PHILODEMIC SOCIETY

OF

GEORGETOWN COLLEGE,

JULY 25, 1837.

BY CHARLES CONSTANTINE PISE, D. D.

---

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED BY JACOB GIDEON, JR.

1837.

W D 1961  
G 541 P 6  
1837

Μελέτη τὸ πᾶν.

PERIANDER.

ce 530467

## ADDRESS.

---

*Gentlemen of the Philodemic Society:*

The usual formality in appearing before you, on the present occasion, would be to express my thanks for the honor which you have been pleased to confer on me. This I not only comply with, as a custom, but I beg you to believe, that I do so with the deepest and most cordial sentiments of which I am capable. For, your invitation calls me back to my own *alma mater*, and surrounds me with congenial scenes and congenial faces. Once more does it bring me to tread the consecrated ground of my childhood; and to breathe, after no little weariness in the bustle of life, under the shade of those hallowed trees, which, when I sported under their foliage as a child, were tender and young, like my own spirit, and pliable to the direction given by the hands of those who planted them where they have clasped their roots.

Joyously, and complacently—I must own it—do I cast my eyes around these familiar scenes. The gray turrets—the beauteous gardens—the undulating hills—the smiling valleys—the pellucid waters, winding like a serpent through the forests, and, like the fairy streams of poesy and science, refreshing, varying and beautifying grot and grove, through which they gurgle and play. Then, are these faces, which, from my boyish days, have been natural as those of nearest kin; persons, whose hearts seemed ever to dilate in my regard, and whose merit is known to me, and appreciated by all the world. There are, moreover, in the silent recesses of the ancient garden, the quiet, rural graves of some who loved me, and whom I loved. The willow tree waves its drooping branches over them, and the lone bird soothes the

spirit of the place, with melancholy notes, the untaught *requiem* of the warbler of the dead. To find myself again amid such scenes, fraught with the sweetest and most sacred associations, and that by your express invitation, is, gentlemen, a favor for which I cannot be too thankful, an honor deserving all my gratitude.

How to remunerate you for your kindness, is, I cannot but acknowledge, a question that seriously perplexes me. You, no doubt, expect a formal oration—and that, too, upon a subject fresh and interesting. What subject shall I select from among so many that crowd before me, that may, at once, please and instruct you? Shall I speak of patriotism, the love of country, of the people, which the original denomination of your Society implies? Shall I speak of Liberty, a theme hackneyed as it is inspiring? Or of Oratory? Or of Taste? Or of Literature? Any one of which topics would be well suited to the present time and place. No; I will leave them all, and direct your attention to a more practical theme, namely, Excellence. Not, indeed, intending to enter into a deep disquisition on the nature of real Excellence, but merely, in a few words, to examine what are the principal obstacles to the attainment of that greatness to which every free and generous heart aspires.

I assume, as a proposition which cannot be disputed, that every noble and ingenuous heart longs for greatness. This aspiration—like that after happiness—excites the spirit, warms the heart, animates the whole being. The Soul, from its very nature, is ever tending towards perfection—never satisfied with the object it has attained—but panting and anhelating after better and higher things. Ardent in the pursuit of Excellence, that principle stirs up all its affections, puts in motion all its energies, and engrosses all its thoughts. To you, most amiable young men, I appeal: is there not within your breasts an abiding tendency towards Excellence? and would you not brand as low and craven that spirit which could rest satisfied in obscurity, lie dormant in the midst of

the stirring events that lead to greatness, and linger, without energy or activity, in the body which it animates, only to conduct it to an ignoble grave! You know—the genius of history has taught you—that the principle of Excellence it was that gave life to the arts and sciences, effect and wisdom to laws, stability and consolidation to governments. It was the same that infused moral into action, and caused the Philosopher to write, the Legislator to decree, and the Patriot to act.

The man who is influenced by this noble principle, studies every resource by which he may attain his object. Mark, young gentlemen, I speak not of false greatness—not of that imaginary thing which has troubled the peace of individuals, and shaken nations to their centre; but of that which is synonymous with Excellence and Virtue. In pursuing this greatness, every means of success will be resorted to by the aspiring heart. Turning aside from the seducing hallucinations of self-love and egotism, it will, with untiring perseverance, tend onward to that glorious reality, which has given to all great men their elevation and their character. In order, therefore, that you may not be deceived by the misrepresentations of error, or led astray by the strong force of passion, it will be necessary to examine what are the principal obstacles to true greatness—and, by discovering them, you will be enabled, under the guidance of truth and wisdom, to take the proper and only path that will conduct you to that noble end.

We may say of Excellence what Fontenelle has observed of happiness—that every one speaks of it, but few understand it. And though it has formed the subject of innumerable philosophic disquisitions, it has not been brought down so practically to the apprehension of the people, as to cause them to derive for themselves all the advantages and usefulness it contains.

1. I regard as the first obstacle to Excellence, the want of courage and perseverance. There is a two fold courage—

the one of mind, the other of heart—both necessary in the acquirement of greatness—and consequently the want of either will render its attainment impossible. The former is the attribute of reason, the latter of moral. Man acts under this two fold principle in proportion as he reflects, compares, analyzes, foresees: but above all, in proportion as he accustoms himself to the vigorous and elevating influence of religion. For, after all, in religion alone true greatness can be found. “God alone is great.” From him, as from its source, emanates all greatness—and you must be convinced, that neither mental courage, nor the courage of the heart can be had, unless they be awakened by the quickening impulses, and strengthened by the plastick energies of divine religion.

Virtue, then, is necessary for the attainment of Excellence. For virtue is inseparable from religion. Virtue is another word for courage: they are so identified, so essentially tautological, that you cannot form two different ideas in expressing the two different words. “*Virtus nescia vinci*” must sustain man in his progress to greatness. Nought should be able to retard it, much less to prevent it altogether. Self-interest must be sacrificed; sloth must be conquered; temptation subdued; every difficulty overcome; every obstacle removed. In a word, courage—true, bold and unconquerable—under all dangers and all perplexities, must uphold, invigorate and urge forward the soul in the pursuit of excellence. Vain would be the desire to become great, if action and perseverance were wanting. The height of the mountain will never be attained, unless we climb its rugged steep; and “who can tell how hard it is to climb” that steep? How can you become great in letters, if not by unremitting study? How great in arms, if not by struggling on amid the dust and desolation of the battle field? How great in science, if not by continued and persevering advances into the mysterious regions of philosophy and nature? For all this, courage—lofty, intrepid courage—is necessary.



By this virtue, all great men have been led to the renown which they have acquired. I do not mean that you should have the

*Triste supercilium durique severa Catonis*

*Frons—,*

but rather, the wise, self-regulating, patriotic courage of an Epaminondas—or that still grander, still nobler, of the Father of our Country, the immortal Washington. Perhaps the whole substance of my idea may be still more comprehensively expressed by him who well knew how to inculcate lessons of the sublimest philosophy: “*nemo accipit bravium, nisi qui currit in stadio.*”

Where such courage is wanting, sloth will soon exercise its baleful influence over the heart and mind; and when that prevails, all the virtues, like the fairest blossoms under the mildew, fade and wither. The dominion of sloth, is like that of Erebus, black and chaotick; it is extended over disorder, decay, ruin. And yet, it is, at first, pleasing to the consenting heart. It has apparent fascinations—it is not without its Circean music, not to yield to the strains of which, it will be necessary for you to imitate the courageous example of Ulysses.

Each sound, too, here, to languishment inclined,

Lulled the weak bosom, and induced to ease :

Aerial music in the warbling wind

At distance rising oft by slow degrees

Nearer and nearer came, 'till o'er the trees

It hung, and breathed such soul-dissolving airs,

As did, alas ! with soft perdition please :

Entangled deep in its enchanting snares

The listening heart forgets all duties and all cares.

The victim of sloth sinks down into the dull waters of oblivion, whose surface is without a ripple—stagnant as the pool of death. The poet, the philosopher, the hero, whose names are transmitted to us, have been wafted on the fresh

and ever-flowing stream gushing from the fountains of heart and mind, over which courage has acted, and perseverance has exercised its unremitting toil. Study, activity, energy, fortitude, have been the springs of noble and immortal actions.

By acts like these

Laconia nursed her hardy sons of old,  
And Rome's unconquered legions urged their way  
Unhurt, through every toil and every clime.

To have made some advances towards Excellence, is not sufficient. The journey onward must be steady and persevering. No matter how distant the goal, or in what mists of obscurity involved, diligence will abridge the length, and shine, like a guiding star, through the shade. Blind confidence, flattering self-esteem, are not the principles of greatness; but wise foresight, cautious advances, and especially manly constancy, which rally and strengthen the energies of soul and body. It follows, therefore, that despondency or weakness are insuperable impediments to the attainment of Excellence. You should remember, that the removal of one difficulty is often but making room for a new one; the overcoming of one obstacle but the preparation for a fresh struggle with a more stubborn one; the destruction of one enemy the mere production of a fiercer antagonist.

Ye, then, who aspire to greatness, quail not before the changes of fortune's brow; be not elated with her bewitching smiles; nor stricken down by her adverse power much less inebriated by her brim-full goblet of success. Young men, before whose vision the wide horizon of the future expands, all cloudless and beauteous, stretching like the rainbow from the hills on which your youth now gambols, to the vales down which your years will decline, believe not the syren which tells you that you will have nought to struggle with—prepare, on the contrary, for disappointment and adversity. Here, in these peaceful haunts of learning,

while you "stretch your listless limbs" on the florid banks of the streams, in whose limpid mirror the calm, unwrinkled forehead is reflected, be assured, in time, that the day-dream of greatness, in which you love to indulge, never can be realized, without encountering a thousand unforeseen and nameless difficulties. But, then, be courageous—be firm ; under all circumstances, bear in mind the philosophic maxim of the Roman lyric :

*Æquam memento rebus in arduis  
Servare mentem.*

2. The second obstacle to Excellence is prejudice. Prejudice, the offspring of ignorance, has such power over the mind, that it not only inflames, but blinds and enslaves it. Its dominion is so widely extended that the greatest geniuses are not exempt from its tyranny. The definition of prejudice given by Bacon, is as correct as it is ingenious. "It is," he says, "a kind of magic lanthorn, through which every object appears shadowy and monstrous." The failings of others viewed through this deceptive medium assume the magnitude of enormous vices ; and the most puny difficulties are exaggerated into terrific obstacles, against which it were vain to hope to contend. To the moral sight, vitiated thus by prejudice, every thing is confused and out of order. A clear perception of objects cannot be obtained—the fairest views are rendered unseemly—the brightest, clouded—the grandest, mean : and thus proper ideas are unattainable, of virtue, of right, of honor, of magnanimity, of generosity—and consequently of true greatness and excellence.

Behold, therefore, the necessity of liberating the mind, as soon as possible, from the pernicious influence of prejudice. And yet, how many are found, among our fellow-beings, to labor under that influence ? Some, entertaining prejudices against individuals, and thus unwilling to be instructed by their wisdom, or directed by their prudence. Some, against such and such an author, without, perhaps,

ever having read his works, and thus forfeiting all the advantages which *they* would otherwise, and which others actually do, derive from his writings. Some, against certain politicians, statesmen, legislators, without being able to tell why, and perhaps unjustly—for they have never investigated their merits—using all their own talents, and exerting those of others likewise, against men, whom not a few regard as lights and ornaments, “*lumina atque ornamenta Reip.*” Some, again, beset with national prejudications, despise every government except their own—and emphatically ask, when there is question of worth or merit, whether any good can come from Nazareth!—whether it is possible for any institution not their own, to be praiseworthy or useful? Hence the caricatures termed travels, tours, &c. &c., of certain men, who, radically infested with national prejudices, go abroad into foreign climes, and unceremoniously brand in print whatever comports not with their own narrow views, or is, in any way, alien from that selfish norma which their imaginations have formed of greatness or perfection. Others, in fine, impregnated with the worst of all prejudices—religious prejudices—can see nothing proper, much less sublime, in any creed save that which was inculcated into their infant minds. Believe me, young gentlemen, the most fierce, the most dangerous of all prejudices, are religious prejudices. They will urge man on to condemn, to persecute, to burn, to torture, in every barbarous variety of manner; and if you ask whether they who act thus know why they act, you will find that they have never studied the subject—that they are actuated by mere passion, and are condemning, persecuting, burning, and torturing, from prejudice. You may be perfectly convinced of this, that no man, haunted by such prejudices, whether individual, political, literary, national or religious, can hope to acquire Excellence. It cannot subsist with prejudice; they are, by their nature, so heterogeneous, that

it is impossible to associate them. The way to greatness lies through so many different scenes, is so perplexed with varying objects, and withal, so sinuous in its direction, that it requires the clearest sight, the wisest caution, and the most unbiassed and discriminating judgment in the aspirant after success.

All prejudices are pernicious, but those most so, which are the offspring of self-love ; actuated by which, man foolishly deems himself able to judge and act in all matters, without any guide or monitor. He frames to his deluded mind his own notion of Excellence, and carries that out, in all his actions and aspirings, taking no heed of counsel, and regarding as unworthy his attention whatever is not congenial to his fond prepossessions. How can such an individual become great ? How Excellent ?

It becomes you, gentlemen, while yet your minds are tender, to give them, by adopting the noble principles inculcated in these academic halls, a proper tendency to Excellence. It should be a part—and no unimportant part—of your present studies, to learn how to destroy prejudice ; to study the philosophy of impartial investigation of men and things ; to profit by the experience of those, and the nature of these, in aiming at Excellence. I know that prejudice takes early root in the opening mind. Hence the deep and lasting impressions of boyhood—hence the avidity with which the childish ear drinks in tales of marvel and romance—the idea of ghosts and nightly apparitions, and fantastic shapes with which the nursery abounds, and the young imagination is disturbed. There are few who will not own with me :

Full many a tale of fairy and of sprite  
My wonder roused, and filled me with affright ;  
My blood ran cold, my bosom throbbed with dread,  
To hear the awful stories of the dead.  
How they appeared at night, forlorn and sad,  
To haunt the faithless, and chastise the bad.

And oft I feared to venture out by night,  
 Lest some pale spectre should invade my sight.  
 And when I flung me down upon my bed,  
 I thought ten thousand ghosts were at my head.

3. From prejudice, which, you have seen, is an unsurmountable impediment to Excellence, I pass to the third obstacle; namely, the want of proper education. The advantages, the necessity of a finished education, for all the sublime purposes of life, need not to be enforced before such an audience. The zeal with which you are engaged in the acquirement of learning, the diligence and emulation which have distinguished you during the past year, and which have called forth from your Professors a high eulogy of your merit, are a sufficient test of your convictions on this important subject. Go on, then, young men: profit by your present advantages, drink deep of the stream of Helicon; follow, with untiring spirits, the genius of education, now through flowery vales, then over rugged hills, anon through fresh and fragrant groves, and then again through barren and thorny plains—follow on, I say; the end of your journey will be, at last, accomplished, and the palm of Excellence be yours.

The object of education is to develope and perfect the physical, intellectual and moral faculties. Where these are not thus perfected, education cannot be complete. The development of the physical powers renders the constitution strong and robust; that of the intellectual gives a prompt perception, and sound judgment, by which the mind is enriched with varied information—the springs of science are unlocked—the production of talent and art are appreciated, and a lofty emulation is awakened, which urges us forward to follow the footsteps of those who have trodden the paths of excellence. The development of the moral faculties—and this forms the principle object of education—renders man apt to receive, and willing to follow, the lessons of wis-

dom—to fulfil all duties—to be just, honest, beneficent, patriotic, religious, and establishes the conviction of what I have before hinted—that true greatness cannot exist without virtue.

This threefold developement is absolutely necessary. In the completion of excellence each one must be found in its proper place, and producing its becoming action. What were physical strength without intellectual culture? A man might, indeed, possess vigor and nerve, and be useful in certain circumstances—he might, like Milo, fell the huge ox to the ground with a single stroke—or like a gigantic gladiator, cleave down, as a sapling, his athletic antagonist; but he would act without reflection and intelligence. Supposing the same individual to enjoy the developement of his intellectual faculties, also; to possess all the knowledge, literary and scientific, that can fall to the lot of man; from these, indeed, he might derive incalculable advantages. He might, like Homer, describe the wars of gods and demigods—like Tully wield the thunders of oratory—like Newton soar into the planetary spheres—but, if he be deprived of moral developement, he will use all his talents to the detriment of society—he will disregard virtue, justice, honor,—and could not possess that excellence to which your view is now directed—moral as well as intellectual.

In this flourishing University, every thing combines to afford its alumni this triple developement of the faculties. The physical are brought into play, and braced with vigor, from the beauty and salubriousness of the situation. Whether the eye turns upon the woodland scenery on one side—or rests on the varied objects of town and city on another—or sketches down the broad Potomac on another—it meets with cheerful scenes, exhilarating views. From the deep glades and verdant hills, the breezes of summer come to visit you, in freshness and fragrance, wafting around your abode the sweet odors of clover, wild flower and vine. The

cool shades of the bowers that cover one of the finest walks in the world, invite to exercise; the clear stream, limpid as the fountain of Brundisium, "*splendidior vitro*," affords an opportunity of tightening the sinews by bathing in its waters—manly games, gymnastic amusements, are encouraged; exercises which impart strength and elasticity to the frame—cheerfulness and buoyancy to the soul. What shall I say of the second developement—that of the intellectual faculties? No youth can possess more ample advantages, in this respect, than you are blessed with. The Professors, under whose care and tuition you are placed, adorned with all the graces and refinements of taste and literature. The course you pursue, fitted to accomplish and perfect the mind. The proximity to the Capitol—where you may listen to the sententious and perspicuous oratory of a Webster, the rapid and popular harangues of a Clay, the copious and kindling elocution of a Calhoun. There, while your intellectual faculties are improved by the eloquence of such men, your patriotism is awakened—your love of liberty, of right, of justice—your hatred of tyranny, oppression and fraud, roused and inflamed.

With regard to the developement of the moral faculties, one word will suffice. You are taught the lessons of virtue, the doctrines of religion. Of virtue, pure, disinterested and practical—of religion, enlightened, sincere, tolerant and philanthropic. I appeal to you all, young gentlemen, but especially to those among you differing from us in points of faith, whether, while your Professors insist on the practice of virtue, and the necessity of religion, they have ever made an attempt to proselytize you by unbecoming and undue influence? But, on the contrary, whether they have not evinced towards you the same regard, attention, interest and solicitude, as towards those of your companions who belong to the communion of the church. Well may the lines of West be applied to you all without distinction:



Yes, happy youths, on Camus' sedgy side  
 You feel each joy that friendship can divide :  
 Each realm of science and of art explore,  
 And with the ancient blend the modern lore.  
 Studious alone to learn whate'er may tend  
 To raise the genius, or the heart to mend.

4. We approach, now, the last of those obstacles to excellence, on which it is my intention to dwell—the inordinate passions. Well has Young described their effect, in two lines :

While passions glow, the heart, like heated steel,  
 Takes each impression, and is worked at pleasure.

Yet, it is only the excess that is to be condemned : for when they are regulated and restrained by religion and judgment, they are aids, instead of being impediments to Excellence. Thus disciplined, they are the aliment of the soul ; in so much that without their action, man would lapse into apathy, indolence, insensibility, and become paralyzed and inert. Not the passions, therefore, but the disordinate passions, are obstacles to Excellence. When these have acquired dominion over man, he is their victim, their prey. He seems to live only for them—he sacrifices repose, fortune, health, happiness, to them—and becomes an idolator at the shrine of ambition, avarice, and voluptuousness.

How can any individual, whose heart is devoured by unlawful ambition, arrive at Excellence ? The inordinately ambitious man will trample upon probity and honor, in order to accomplish his ends—consequently, in the Temple of Excellence there will be no niche for him. In his view, what is friendship, what the bond of consanguinity ? Nothing whatever. Rather than not reach the pinnacle to which he soars, he would ascend over the tenderest and most sacred relations of life, and step, as on the grades of a ladder, over the bodies of his fellow-beings. With this kind of ambition many other vices are leagued :—baseness, adulation, perfidy,

revenge, calumny and its confederates; all of which are hostile to noble sentiments, disinterested action and genuine greatness. It cares not for virtue—it is timid, false, changeable; rejoices in nothing but its own glory, and delights in the failure and downfall of other men; as if the calamities of others were a prop and consolidation of its own towering schemes. The author of the “Love of Fame,” paints, with a master style, the woful consequences of vicious ambition, when he exclaims: it

Made bold Alphonsus his Creator blame,  
 Empedocles hurled down the burning steep—  
 And stranger still, made Alexander weep.

In your aspirings after Excellence, let not ambition like this seize on your minds. But repress not a virtuous ambition—that elevating principle which has inspired all great and good men; and without which, no magnanimous act could be effected, no noble object be attained. This principle of action is nothing different from that love of Excellence which is characteristic of a great mind, and which has its origin in virtue—or rather, with more propriety it should be said—which is virtue itself.

Avarice is incompatible with Excellence; much more so than vicious ambition. For, while the former urges one man to squander away treasures as well as blood, in order to grasp the phantom he pursues—the latter locks up in the cold depths of his heart every energy, and in the brazen coffers every penny: ever loth, in dark despondency, and fretful solicitude, watches and pines the withering miser. Hugging, with imaginary delight, as objects of real happiness, those treasures which are but the means of procuring happiness. His lust for lucre never abates—the more he possesses the more he pants for; “semper avarus eget.” In his estimation, nothing is worth a wish, much less an effort, but gold and silver; to hoard up which, he will sacri-

fice every feeling of humanity. He will betray his friends—sell his conscience—barter his country :

*Vendidit hic auro patriam.*

How little does such a grovelling wretch understand the beautiful philosophy of Pope, when paying a merited tribute to Bathurst, he exclaims :

The sense to value riches, with the art  
T' enjoy them, and the virtue to impart,  
Not meanly, nor ambitiously pursued,  
Nor sunk by sloth, nor raised by servitude,  
To balance fortune by a just expense,  
Join with economy, magnificence ;  
With splendor, charity ; with plenty, health,  
Oh, teach us Bathurst !—

Guided by such principles, the man of wealth enjoys the means of facilitating his way to Excellence. He can afford an opportunity to the widow to proclaim it—the orphan to feel it—and the establishments of religion to immortalize it.

A still greater obstacle to Excellence is voluptuousness. Intent upon degrading pursuits, what idea can the man, labouring under the tyranny of this passion, form of greatness or worth ? Behold him skulking along with shame depicted on his countenance ; stamped, like Cain, with the malediction of virtue and heaven—his eye dreads the light of sun or moon, and his being is wasted, until he becomes a burthen to himself, unfit for any generous purpose ; sad, solitary and wretched. Is such a being capable of any thing like greatness ? Debased in the gratification of his passions, he lies inert, useless to society ; nay, branded with the stigma of disgrace, and condemned, as it were, to the anticipated corruptions of the grave.

Believe me, young gentlemen, these, and all other inordinate passions, are obstacles—positive and unsurmountable—to real greatness and excellence ; and it is your duty, as well as interest, to convince yourselves, at an early period, that to become excellent, you must first conquer every law-

less passion. Ambition, avarice, sensuality, must be conquered—jealousy, revenge, envy, must find no place in the heart that yearns for greatness. For, in the language of Armstrong—

Fear and jealousy fatigue the soul,—  
Engross the subtle ministers of life,  
And spoil the laboring functions of their share.  
Hence the sear gloom that melancholy wears,  
\* \* \* \* \* and the fallow hue  
Of envy, jealousy : the meagre stare  
Of sore revenge.—

From what has been said, you perceive that the attainment of Excellence is no easy thing. The obstacles that lie in the way are many—and without the aid of virtue and perseverance—insuperable. Is not the subject worthy the attention of generous and aspiring hearts? Hearts like those which beat in the breasts of the youth, high and patriotic, whom I am now addressing? You have followed me with attention—and though somewhat abstract my theme, the subject matter, interesting to young men just starting on the arena of life, could not fail to enlist your feelings, and exercise your judgment. Keep, then, this object in view—in any pursuit in which you may hereafter engage, be this your goal—aim at Excellence. If that be letters or science ; law or diplomacy ; oratory or poetry, or history ; or any other branch of learning, rest not satisfied with mediocrity. For, what Horace remarks of one profession, may, with equal justice, be applied to every other :

*Mediocribus esse poetis*

*Non Dii, non homines, non concessere columnæ.*

Keep before your eyes those models of Excellence whom history has cherished in her annals, for the instruction and imitation of posterity. Those lights which have shed an undying lustre through the gloom of ages ; and which, neither rivalry could eclipse, nor time extinguish ; but which

burn on with greater splendor, in proportion as other luminaries arise, and shine around them, in the firmament of glory.

Our own Alma Mater rejoices in the names of some of the most distinguished ornaments of the Republic. As she unfolds the parchments on which they are recorded, she dwells with peculiar complacency on a Gaston, a Walsh, and many others. The first, famed throughout the entire country for his profound legal acquirements, his chaste and touching eloquence, his magnanimous love of justice, and above all, his spotless and transcendent character. The second, admired as a general scholar, a philosophical and copious writer; possessing wit that flashes from his tongue, and powers of communicating thought, extraordinary and unrivalled.

How many other names might I not mention, of which our university is proud—and justly proud? In almost every department of Excellence, she can point her finger to her own alumni; and in doing so, “remember,” she thus addresses you, young men, “the same facilities which they enjoyed are now in your hands. The system of education, which formed them to Excellence, will have the same effect in your regard, if you but put to profit the advantages it holds forth.”

That you will, we love to flatter ourselves there is no doubt—your Professors expect it—your parents anticipate it—your country demands it. I feel certain of the result—I cherish the pleasing hope, that among those who have listened to me, on this occasion, there will be some, whose names will be renowned in the records of their country,—names to which some future orator before the Philodemic Society will revert with glorious emotion, to stimulate to Excellence the admiring youths, who will fill these benches in after years. DIXI.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 029 929 873 5